

CGG: Wither Pakatan's shadow cabinet?
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A good governance watchdog has urged Pakatan Rakyat to name its Parliamentary shadow cabinet in order to allow the public to evaluate their policies.

Jeffery Phang, who heads the Coalition of Good Governance, said that it was necessary for Pakatan to take this matter seriously.

"With the shadow cabinet, it gives us a bit of tasting flavor, we can see and judge how perceptive the government-in-waiting's behaviour are," said Phang when contacted.

Phang was commenting on Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's challenge for Pakatan to name its shadow cabinet to prove that the opposition coalition was capable of working together.

This was said in the run-up to the Merlimau by-election during a function on Feb 19.

"I am glad that the Prime Minister challenged them as it will keep them on their toes," said Phang.

Instead of a shadow cabinet, Pakatan announced on July 2009 that it had formed its own "cabinet committees" to monitor government ministries.

These committees comprise of an MP each from PKR, PAS and DAP. It is understood that these committees had been largely dormant.

No recognition from BN

Two Pakatan MP's, when contacted, brushed off allegations that the committee was a political gimmick, arguing that the committee's were crippled because it was not recognised by the federal government.

"We are not recognised by the BN government... We are also not respected by the Dewan Rakyat speaker," Batu MP Tian Chua.

Chua added that the panel was never given the opportunity to take part or have a say when it comes to amendments or passing of bills.

"We should be able to sit in each respective committee to discuss any bills or drafts before it is passed, to come up with proper decision to avoid any fight, which is much healthier," he said.

Chua, who is part of the committee on energy, green technology and water, said that a shadow cabinet comes with inherent flaws because such members may not necessarily hold the same position when in power.

"Let's say when we take over Putrajaya and I am appointed energy, green technology and water minister but for some reason, suddenly, they feel that I am not capable and assign my position to someone else, it would look bad," said Chua, who is also the PKR

vice-president.

No two-party system yet

Similar, Kuala Selangor MP Dzulkefly Ahmad, also a PAS central committee member, said that the federal government should take Pakatan's cabinet committees seriously.

"They should willing to listen to our opinions and tap the expertise of our MPs instead of always brushing their opinions aside," he said.

Dzulkefly blamed the federal government for refusing to adopt a bi-partisan approach and reminded the authorities that Malaysia had yet to see the formation of a two-party system.

"We are not similar to the United States or United Kingdom where they have two party systems. We are not as established as both countries to begin with.

"Therefore, his challenge (by Najib) is totally uncalled for and it is unsolicited. He is playing like a broken record," he added.

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